molecular biology, for example, see Sambrook *et al.*, 1989. The promoters employed may be constitutive, or inducible, and can be used under the appropriate conditions to direct high level expression of the introduced DNA segment, such as is advantageous in the large-scale production of recombinant proteins or peptides. Appropriate promoter systems contemplated for use in high-level expression include, but are not limited to, the *Pichia* expression vector system (Pharmacia LKB Biotechnology).

In connection with expression embodiments to prepare recombinant proteins and peptides, it is contemplated that longer DNA segments will most often be used, with DNA segments encoding the entire peptide sequence being most preferred. However, it will be appreciated that the use of shorter DNA segments to direct the expression of crystal peptides or epitopic core regions, such as may be used to generate anti-crystal protein antibodies, also falls within the scope of the invention. DNA segments that encode peptide antigens from about 8 to about 50 amino acids in length, or more preferably, from about 8 to about 30 amino acids in length, or even more preferably, from about 8 to about 20 amino acids in length are contemplated to be particularly useful. Such peptide epitopes may be amino acid sequences which comprise contiguous amino acid sequence from SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:12, SEQ ID NO:59, or SEQ ID NO:61.

2.6 METHODS FOR PREPARING MUTAGENIZED *CRY1** GENE SEGMENTS

The present invention encompasses both site-specific mutagenesis methods and random mutagenesis of a nucleic acid segment encoding one of the crystal proteins described herein. In particular, methods are disclosed for the random mutagenesis of nucleic acid segments encoding the amino acid sequences identified as being in, or immediately adjacent to, a loop region of domain 1 of the crystal protein, or between the last α helix of domain one and the first β strand of domain 2. The mutagenesis of this nucleic acid segment results in one or more modifications to one or more loop regions of the encoded crystal protein. Using the assay methods described herein, one may then identify mutants arising from this procedure which have improved insecticidal properties or altered specificity, either intraorder or interorder.

In a preferred embodiment, the randomly-mutagenized contiguous nucleic acid segment encodes an amino acid sequence in a loop region of domain 1 or a modified amino acid sequence in a loop region between domain 1 and domain 2of a *B. thuringiensis* crystal protein having insecticidal activity against Lepidopteran insects. Preferably, the modified amino acid sequence comprises a loop region between α helices 1 and 2, α helices 2 and 3, α helices 3 and 4, α helices 4 and 5, α helices 5 and 6, or α helices 6 and 7 of domain 1, or between α helix 7 of domain 1 and β strand 1 of domain 2. Preferred crystal proteins include Cry1A, Cry1B, Cry1C, Cry1D, Cry1E, Cry1F, Cry1G, Cry1H, Cry1I, Cry1J, and Cry1K crystal protein, with Cry1Aa, Cry1Ab, Cry1Ac, Cry1Ad, Cry1Ae, Cry1Ba, Cry1Bb, Cry1Bc, Cry1Ca, Cry1Cb, Cry1Da, Cry1Db, Cry1Ea, Cry1Eb, Cry1Fa, Cry1Fb, Cry1Hb, Cry1Ia, Cry1Ib, Cry1Ja, and Cry1Jb crystal proteins being particularly preferred.

In an illustrative embodiment, a nucleic acid segment (SEQ ID NO:7).encoding a Cry1Ca crystal protein was mutagenized in a region corresponding to about amino acid residue 118 to about amino acid residue 124 of the Cry1Ca protein (SEQ ID NO:8). The modified Cry1Ca* resulting from the mutagenesis was termed, Cry1C.563.

In a second illustrative embodiment, a nucleic acid segment (SEQ ID NO:9).encoding a Cry1Ca crystal protein was mutagenized in a region corresponding to about amino acid residue 118 to about amino acid residue 124 of the Cry1Ca protein (SEQ ID NO:10). The modified Cry1Ca* resulting from the mutagenesis was termed, Cry1C.579.

In a third illustrative embodiment. a nucleic acid segment (SEQ ID NO:11).encoding a Cry1Ca crystal protein was mutagenized in a region corresponding to about amino acid residue 118 to about amino acid residue 124 of the Cry1Ca protein (SEQ ID NO:12). The modified Cry1Ca* resulting from the mutagenesis was termed, Cry1C.499.

The means for mutagenizing a DNA segment encoding a crystal protein having one or more loop regions in its amino acid sequence are well-known to those of skill in the art. Modifications to such loop regions may be made by random, or site-specific mutagenesis procedures. The loop region may be modified by altering its structure

through the addition or deletion of one or more nucleotides from the sequence which encodes the corresponding un-modified loop region.

Mutagenesis may be performed in accordance with any of the techniques known in the art such as and not limited to synthesizing an oligonucleotide having one or more mutations within the sequence of a particular crystal protein. A "suitable host" is any host which will express Cry, such as and not limited to *Bacillus thuringiensis* and *Escherichia coli*. Screening for insecticidal activity, in the case of Cry1C includes and is not limited to lepidopteran-toxic activity which may be screened for by techniques known in the art.

In particular, site-specific mutagenesis is a technique useful in the preparation of individual peptides, or biologically functional equivalent proteins or peptides, through specific mutagenesis of the underlying DNA. The technique further provides a ready ability to prepare and test sequence variants, for example, incorporating one or more of the foregoing considerations, by introducing one or more nucleotide sequence changes into the DNA. Site-specific mutagenesis allows the production of mutants through the use of specific oligonucleotide sequences which encode the DNA sequence of the desired mutation, as well as a sufficient number of adjacent nucleotides, to provide a primer sequence of sufficient size and sequence complexity to form a stable duplex on both sides of the deletion junction being traversed. Typically, a primer of about 17 to about 75 nucleotides or more in length is preferred, with about 10 to about 25 or more residues on both sides of the junction of the sequence being altered.

In general, the technique of site-specific mutagenesis is well known in the art, as exemplified by various publications. As will be appreciated, the technique typically employs a phage vector which exists in both a single stranded and double stranded form. Typical vectors useful in site-directed mutagenesis include vectors such as the M13 phage. These phage are readily commercially available and their use is generally well known to those skilled in the art. Double stranded plasmids are also routinely employed in site directed mutagenesis which eliminates the step of transferring the gene of interest from a plasmid to a phage.